



Working with First Generation Students

Definition: First-Generation college students are defined as someone whose parent(s)/guardians did not complete a 4-year degree OR completed a degree at a foreign university. Being first-generation is important to note as parents may not understand the nuances of higher education, thus leaving the students at a disadvantage.

National Research Says:	Research Often Forgets to Mention:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33% of students are considered first-generation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 59% of first-generation students are also the first sibling in their family to attend college • After six years of first entering postsecondary education, 56% of first-generation college students have not earned any postsecondary credential. • In their first year in postsecondary education, a higher percentage of first-generation students used financial aid services, but lower percentages used health, academic advising, and academic support services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First-generation students are breaking down barriers and paving new paths for themselves. • Being first-generation is a motivator for many students. • Going to college means learning to walk between worlds, and for some, never quite fitting in to either. Support from institutions and faculty members can have a real and positive impact on first-generation students. • First-generation students have identified mentorship as a key component of successful student services.

Supporting First-Generation Students:	Things to Avoid:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify and explain how to navigate your course • Be transparent about classroom expectations • In addition to course material, teach students how to study • Encourage students to connect with campus activities and groups • Develop personal relationships • If you are a first-generation college student, fight invisibility by sharing your own path • Know the resources available to first-generation students such as TRIO Student Support Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assuming intersectionality with first generation and low-income • Assuming that a first-generation student is not academically ready for college

The More you know:

- <https://www.brightspotstrategy.com/first-generation-student-experience-higher-education/>
- <https://firstgen.naspa.org/>
- <https://making-waves.org>